

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OIC-04 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 AID-20 EB-11

OMB-01 SWF-02 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /200 W
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R 162006Z APR 74

FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3580

INFO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

USINT ALGIERS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID EGEN PINT LI US

SUBJ: ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM'S MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS OF LIBERIA

FOLLOWING ARE PRINCIPAL POINTS RAISED IN COURSE OF
CALL BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM ON LIBERIAN FORMIN
DENNIS AT THE LIBERIAN UN MISSION APRIL 15.

1. UNGA SPECIAL SESSION. DENNIS REITERATED ARGUMENT
MADE BY LIBERIAN PRES TOLBERT IN HIS SPEECH TO SPECIAL
SESSION THAT ARAB OPEC STATES, HAVING ENJOYED SUPPORT
OF BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON ME QUESTION, NOW OWED IT
TO THOSE COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE RELIEF FROM INCREASED COST
OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. DENNIS SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD WITH
VERY GREAT INTEREST TO LEARNING DETAILS OF PROOSAL WHICH
PRES BOUMEDIENE, IN HIS SPEECH TO SPECIAL SESSION, SAID
ALGERIA WOULD BE MAKING FOR ASSISTANCE TO POOREST DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES. DENNIS EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH RESULTS
ACHIEVED AT THE KAMPALA OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING ON
QUESTION OIL PRICE RELIEF AND SAID HE HOPED OAU COMMITTEE
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OF SEVEN WOULD BE ABLE ACHIEVE MORE CONCRETE RESULTS IN

FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ARAB OIL PRODUCERS.

2. MIDDLE EAST. IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION OF ME SITUATION, DENNIS EXPRESSED SOME REGRET THAT CONSIDERATIONS OF AFRICAN SOLIDARITY HAD FORCED LIBERIA TO JOIN WITH OTHERS IN BREAKING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. SOLUTION OF ME PROBLEM, HE SAID, WOULD REQUIRE MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION, AND THIS COULD HARDLY BE FURTHERED BY CUTTING OFF DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS.

3. LIBERIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS; TOLBERT SPEECH TO UNGA SPECIAL SESSION. WHILE HE HAD NO INTENTION RAISE SPECIFIC BILATERAL QUESTIONS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM AT THIS TIME, THERE WAS, DENNIS SAID, ONE MATTER WHICH HE THOUGHT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST. HE DESCRIBED HOW CERTAIN UNNAMED LIBERIANS HAD PROPOSED A CONTRIBUTION OF SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS BY THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE US FOR RELIEF OF TORNADO VICTIMS IN THE MIDDLE WEST. HAVING RECEIVED SO MUCH FROM US, LIBERIA MIGHT SHOW APPRECIATION BY GIVING ASSISTANCE IN RETURN WHEN THE US FOUND ITSELF FACED WITH ADVERSITY. DENNIS SAID HE THOUGHT IDEA HAD BEEN A GOOD ONE AND HAD TURNED IT DOWN ONLY BECAUSE IT MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTOOD. THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE ALWAYS READY TO LABEL LIBERIA A LACKEY OF THE US. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, HE CITED NEW YORK POST ARTICLE ON PRES TOLBERT'S SPEECH TO THE SPECIAL SESSION, IN WHICH TOLBERT HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF HAVING BEEN "COACHED" BY US. FONMIN DENNIS ASSURED EASUM THAT LIBERIA CONSIDERED ITSELF, AND HOPED TO REMAIN, BEST FRIEND OF THE US IN AFRICA.

4. SAHEL DROUGHT. DENNIS SAID HIS GOVERNMENT DISTURBED BY INDICATIONS THAT DROUGHT MOVING SOUTH. THESE INCLUDED BOTH A DIMINUTION OF RIVER FLOW, WHICH HAD CREATED SHORTAGE OF HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER AND REQUIRED LARGER IMPORTS OF EXPENSIVE FUEL OIL, AS WELL AS A LESSENING OF RAINFALL, WHICH HURT RUBBER PRODUCTION. WHILE EFFECTS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS NOT YET SERIOUS, HE SAID, LIBERIA IS CONCERNED ABOUT LONGER-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF DROUGHT AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ASSISTANCE THE US MIGHT PROVIDE IN FORECASTING THEM. EASUM EXPLAINED MIT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESEARCH PROJECT, WHICH HE SAID WAS INVESTIGATING DROUGHT'S LONGER-TERM ASPECTS AND IMPACT NOT ONLY ON SAHEL PROPER BUT ALSO ON AREAS SURROUNDING IT. DENNIS MENTIONED ONE SPECIFIC PROJECT WITH WHICH HE SAID US ASSISTANCE WOULD BE APPRECIATED: A \$50,000 TEMPORARY DAM WHICH IS REQUIRED TO PREVENT SALINE WATER FROM BACKING UP INTO ST. PAUL RIVER AS A RESULT OF REDUCED RIVER FLOW.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DISASTER RELIEF, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974USUNN01325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740088-0031
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740438/aaaabidc.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <07-Aug-2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS OF LIBERIA
TAGS: EAID, EGEN, PINT, LI, US, UN, (EASUM), (DENNIS, C CECIL JR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005